खाद्य मंत्रालय के राज्य मंत्री (श्री तरूण गोगोई) : (क) 52.77 लाख मीटरी टन ।

(ख) जी, हां ।

(ग) प्रश्न ही नहीं उठता ।

Shortage of wheat

599. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a shortage of wheat for public distribution system as well as for sale in the open market;

(b) if so, whether Government have taken a decision to import wheat to control the prices ; and

(c) what action Government have taken against hoarders to bring out the concealed stocks to the open market ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD (SHRI TARUN GOGOI) : (a) No, Sir, The stocks of wheat are adequate to meet the reasonable requirements of the public distribution system and open market sale. However, these stocks are less than the stocking limits prescribed.

(b) The Government have decided to import one million tonnes of wheat with a view to improve the availability of wheat and to contain open market prices.

(c) State Governments and Union Territory Administrations have been taking action against persons found to be indulging in hoarding and other mal-practices in respect of essential commodities under the various Control Orders issued under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 and other relevant legislations. The States have been recently requested to step up de-hoarding operations. During the months of January and February, 1992 (up to 14-2-1992), 14-179 raids were made, 501 persons arrested 393 prosecuted and goods worth Rs. 6004.14 lakhs were seized.

BICP recommendations on FCI

600. DR. NARREDDY THULASI REDDY : Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state :

(a) what are the recommendations of Bureau of Industrial Costs and Prices (BICP) regarding improvement in the Food Corporation of India; and

(b) what action has been taken by Government on these recommendations ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD (SHRI TARUN GOGOI) : (a) The main recommendations include suggestions for cost minimisation and consumer satisfaction, greater delegation and accountability of regional offices, effecting economy in staff and administration, improving storage facilities and their utilisation, and the like for achieving better operational efficiency. These also include measures for controlling increasing trend of foodgrain losses during storage and transit, rationalising the working of labour. It has brought together findings on actual costs of FCI, viability of its operations as compared with relevant parameters in the market. The recommendations are aimed at improving operational efficiency and reduction of costs.

(b) The Government constituted and Empowered Committee to examine the report. The Empowered Committee has given its recommendations which are in the process of finalisation by the Government.

Stock of Wheat and Rice

601. SHRI RAM NARESH YADAV: Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is sufficient stock of wheat and rice for domestic consumption in the country ;

(b) if so, the resons for increase in the price of these commodities; and

(c) what steps Government propose to take in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD (SHRI TARUN GOGOI) : (a) The estimated stock of foodgrains (rice-wheat and coarsegrains) with public agencies as on 1st February, 1992 inclusive of stocks reported to be held by the State Governments, were of the order of 14·455 million tonnes, which are considered adequate to meet the requirements of the public distribution system.

(b) The rise in prices could be mainly attributed to the general inflationary conditions and holding back of stocks by farmers/traders with a view to sell the same at higher prices later.

(c) The steps taken by the Government to check increase in prices include open market sale of wheat by the FCI, increase in the allocation and supply of rice and wheat for the Public Distribution System and under-taking dehoarding operations.

It has also been decided to import one million tonnes of wheat.